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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Report of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (UN-Space) on its thirty-seventh session

(Geneva, 24 August 2017)

I. Introduction

1. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (UN-Space) is a mechanism first set up in the mid-1970s to promote collaboration, synergy, the exchange of information and the coordination of plans and programmes between United Nations entities in the implementation of activities involving the use of space technology and its applications. It has evolved over time, and has held 37 sessions to date. The present document contains the report of UN-Space on its thirty-seventh session.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 71/90, urged UN-Space, under the leadership of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, to continue to examine how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and encouraged entities of the United Nations system to participate, as appropriate, in UN-Space coordination efforts.

3. The thirty-seventh session of UN-Space, held on 24 August 2017, was organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs in its capacity as the secretariat of UN-Space and hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO) at its headquarters in Geneva.

4. The session was held in conjunction with the United Nations/WHO/Switzerland Conference on Strengthening Space Cooperation for Global Health, which was held in Geneva from 23 to 25 August 2017.

5. The session was chaired by the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and was attended by representatives of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, the International Telecommunication Union, the Operational Satellite Applications Programme of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, WHO and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

6. WHO, in its capacity as host of the session, made WebEx teleconferencing links available to allow for cost-effective participation of United Nations entities based overseas. The list of participants is contained in annex I to the present report.

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II. Thirty-seventh session of UN-Space

A. Opening of the session

7. The Chair, in her opening statement, welcomed participants to the session and stressed the importance of unified efforts of United Nations entities in shaping the global space-related agenda in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

B. Adoption of the agenda

8. Recalling the agreement reached at its thirty-fourth session, in 2014, that a more flexible agenda could allow for the consideration of ad hoc items, UN-Space adopted the following agenda for its thirty-seventh session:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Orientation on preparations for UNISPACE+50 and beyond towards "Space2030".
4. Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2018–2019, to be submitted to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in June 2018.
5. Special reports by UN-Space on initiatives and applications for space-related inter-agency cooperation, including the special report on developments within the United Nations system related to space weather (A/AC.105/1146).
6. Coordination of future plans and programmes of common interest for cooperation and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas.
7. Any other business.

C. Orientation on preparations for UNISPACE+50 and beyond towards "Space2030"

9. The Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs provided an orientation on preparations for UNISPACE+50, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, to be marked in 2018, culminating in the high-level segment, to be held in Vienna on 20 and 21 June 2018. She also provided an update on the status of preparations under seven UNISPACE+50 thematic priorities that would form the basis for shaping a strategic vision for the "Space2030" agenda and its implementation.

D. Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2018–2019, to be submitted to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in June 2018

10. UN-Space noted that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its fifty-ninth session, in 2016, welcomed with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Coordination of space-related activities within the United

Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2016–2017 — meeting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (A/AC.105/1115).

11. UN-Space agreed that the reports of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system served as a strategic tool for the United Nations to avoid duplication of efforts in the field of space science and technology, and that future reports should continue to highlight the efforts of United Nations system entities in delivering as one in space-related activities in support of the 2030 Agenda.

12. UN-Space recalled the following agreements made at its thirtieth session, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 March 2010 (see A/AC.105/960, paras. 11 and 14):

(a) Reports of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system should be issued on a biennial basis, starting with the period 2012–2013;

(b) In years when no such report of the Secretary-General is to be issued, a special report on a selected topic should be considered;

(c) A review of this reporting structure should be made in 2017.

13. UN-Space expressed its satisfaction with the current reporting structure and agreed that reports of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system and special reports of UN-Space should continue to be issued biennially on an alternating basis.

14. UN-Space agreed that the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2018–2019, to be submitted for consideration by the Committee at its sixty-first session, in 2018, should focus on reinforcing synergies in efficiency measures in the use of space science, technology and applications within the United Nations system in support of global development efforts.

E. Special reports by UN-Space on initiatives and applications for space-related inter-agency cooperation, including the special report on developments within the United Nations system related to space weather (A/AC.105/1146)

15. UN-Space recalled that its previous special reports had addressed the following themes: new and emerging technologies, applications and initiatives for space-related inter-agency cooperation (A/AC.105/843); space benefits for Africa: contribution of the United Nations system (A/AC.105/941); use of space technology within the United Nations system to address climate change issues (A/AC.105/991); space for agriculture development and food security (A/AC.105/1042); space for global health (A/AC.105/1091); implementation of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/AC.105/1116); and space weather (A/AC.105/1146).

16. UN-Space noted that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its sixtieth session, in 2017, welcomed with appreciation the special report of UN-Space on developments within the United Nations system related to space weather (A/AC.105/1146) and also noted that the report was instrumental in assisting the Committee in its preparations under the UNISPACE+50 thematic priority on an international framework for space weather services by providing an overview of efforts in the area of space weather.

17. UN-Space noted that future special reports could focus on cooperation with the private sector and public/private partnership models in promoting the use of space science, technology and applications for economic growth and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

18. UN-Space agreed that the focus of its special report to be presented to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its sixty-second session, in 2019, would be decided at the thirty-eighth session of UN-Space, in 2018.

F. Coordination of future plans and programmes of common interest for cooperation and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas

19. Following on the consideration of potential themes for its special reports on initiatives and applications for space-related inter-agency cooperation, UN-Space agreed to organize a workshop, to be held in New York in the second half of 2018, to consider public/private partnership models and cooperation with the private sector to increase the use of space science, technology and applications for economic growth and sustainable development, as well as the legal and ethical aspects of cooperation models involving non-State actors.

20. UN-Space also agreed to establish a global financing facility to enable deeper engagement of United Nations entities in cross-sectoral activities relating to the use of space science, technology, information and applications.

21. Representatives of participating United Nations entities provided overviews of their current activities, focusing on areas of common interest related to cooperation involving the application of space technology for development.

22. UN-Space agreed that participating entities, through UN-Space focal points, should continue to provide to the Office for Outer Space Affairs, on a regular basis, updated information on their space-related programmes and activities, and that such information could be used to form a calendar of events, with a view to increasing awareness of upcoming conferences, meetings and events.

G. Any other business

23. UN-Space noted that a questionnaire on the services of the European Earth Observation Programme (Copernicus) had been circulated to UN-Space focal points by the secretariat via email on 18 August 2017, and encouraged entities that were currently using Copernicus emergency or security services to complete the questionnaire by 30 August 2017. Completed questionnaires would be channelled by the Office for Outer Space Affairs to the expert group established by the European Commission to address future Copernicus security services.

24. UN-Space agreed on the following provisional agenda for its thirty-eighth session:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Orientation on the outcomes of UNISPACE+50 high-level segment and preparations for "Space2030".
4. Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2018–2019, to be submitted to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its sixty-first session.
5. Special reports by UN-Space on initiatives and applications for space-related inter-agency cooperation.
6. Coordination of future plans and programmes of common interest for cooperation and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas.
7. Any other business.

25. UN-Space expressed its gratitude to WHO for the excellent arrangements made in hosting the thirty-seventh session of UN-Space and the thirteenth open session of UN-Space.

26. UN-Space agreed that its thirty-eighth session should be held in conjunction with the workshop on public/private partnership models and cooperation with the private sector referred to in paragraph 19 above, and that the exact dates of the session and the workshop would be identified during the intersessional period by the Office for Outer Space Affairs in its capacity as secretariat of UN-Space. UN-Space also agreed that the workshop would serve the purpose of promoting dialogue among Member States and United Nations entities.

III. Open session of UN-Space

27. The thirteenth open session of UN-Space was held on 24 August 2017 as a high-level panel on the transformative potential of space technology for development: approaches and opportunities in the United Nations system. The session addressed the use of space technology and its potential contribution to UNISPACE+50, including in relation to UNISPACE+50 thematic priorities on strengthened space cooperation for global health and the international framework for space weather services.

28. The thirteenth open session followed the format developed in 2015 for the twelfth open session, which was structured as a joint UN-Space-Bonn Conference high-level panel on space-based information for development, convened as an integral part of the United Nations/Germany International Conference on Earth Observation: global solutions for the challenges of sustainable development in societies at risk, held in Bonn, Germany, from 26 to 28 May 2015.

29. The themes of previous open sessions of UN-Space include the following: education and training in space-related areas: challenges and opportunities in the United Nations system (2004); space technology for disaster management: opportunities within the United Nations system (2005); space technology for sustainable development and disaster management: opportunities within the United Nations system (2006); the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development in the United Nations system (2007); public-private partnerships and innovative funding approaches in the United Nations system to promote the use of space technology and its applications (2008); space benefits for Africa: contribution of the United Nations (2009); space technology for emergency communications (2010); space and climate change (2011); space for agriculture and food security (2012); space and disaster risk reduction: planning for resilient human settlements (2013); engaging space tools for development on Earth — contribution of space technology and applications to the post-2015 development agenda (2014); and space-based information for development (2015).

30. The open session of UN-Space was organized in a spirit of flexibility with a view to promoting dialogue among United Nations entities, Member States and other stakeholders. The programme of the open session is contained in annex II to the present report.

31. The panellists at the open session represented United Nations entities working on issues related to health, space weather, transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, the use of satellite data and products for weather, climate, water and related applications, and space-based frequency allocations.

32. The representative of WHO emphasized that there was still a distinct lack of awareness of linkages between health and outer space, and of the benefits that space science, technology and applications could offer in the global health domain and for the attainment of Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, and shared his personal experience, featuring the life-saving potential of space technology in general and of satellite communications in particular.

33. The representative of the Office for Outer Space Affairs outlined the progress made in the preparations for the UNISPACE+50 event, which would be marked by a high-level segment to be held on 20 and 21 June 2018 and which was envisaged to conclude with concrete deliverables and outcomes in the form of a dedicated General Assembly resolution and a strategic vision — the "Space2030" agenda and its implementation plan — for strengthening the contribution of space activities and space tools to the achievement of the global agendas for sustainable development.

34. The representative of the Office for Disarmament Affairs highlighted the Office's work, in line with its mandate, on the development of a normative framework for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, including in outer space, and also presented the report of the Secretary-General on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (A/72/65), and informed participants that the joint half-day panel discussion by the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly on possible challenges to space security and sustainability was being jointly organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Office for Disarmament Affairs and was to be held in a plenary meeting during the seventy-second session of the Assembly, on 12 October 2017.

35. The representative of WMO presented the organization's satellite activities under the framework of the WMO Space Programme, comprising four main components: (a) space-based observation systems; (b) access to satellite data and products; (c) awareness and training; and (d) space weather coordination; and also presented the space weather services being implemented under the four-year plan for WMO activities related to space weather, 2016–2019, aimed at improving the capability of WMO members to deliver space weather services.

36. The representative of the International Telecommunication Union briefed participants on the evolving international regulations on satellite services, including in relation to new frequency bands for space services that could increase capacity and accommodate new applications, and on new developments and studies on frequency-related regulations under preparation for consideration by the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019, as well as the calendar of activities leading up to the Conference.

37. The representative of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG) provided information on the work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in the fields of navigation, positioning and tracking systems and space weather, including activities of ICG and its Providers' Forum, and on the outcomes of the United Nations/United States of America Workshop on the International Space Weather Initiative: the decade after the International Heliophysical Year 2007, held in preparation for UNISPACE+50 thematic priority 4, in Boston, United States, from 31 July to 4 August 2017.

38. The panel discussion was followed by a question-and-answer session.

Annex I

List of participants at the thirty-seventh session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities

Chair: S. Di Pippo (Office for Outer Space Affairs)

Secretary: N. Hedman (Office for Outer Space Affairs)

United Nations Secretariat

Office for Disarmament Affairs	R. Vogelaar
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	C. Williams
Office for Outer Space Affairs	A. Duysenhanova L. Czaran S. Gadimova

Specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system

International Telecommunication Union	M. Sakamoto C. C. Loo
Operational Satellite Applications Programme of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research	E. Bjorgo
World Health Organization	R. Krishnamurthy
World Meteorological Organization	L. Fernandez Montoya

Annex II

Programme for the thirteenth open session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held on 24 August 2017

The transformative potential of space technology for development: approaches and opportunities in the United Nations system

Introductory remarks

Simonetta Di Pippo	Director, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs

Panel discussion

Panellists:

Hans Troedsson	Assistant Director-General for General Management, in charge of the Health Systems and Innovation cluster, World Health Organization
Simonetta Di Pippo	Director, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs
Anja Kaspersen	Director, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva Branch, and Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament
Toshiyuki Kurino	Chief, Space-based Observing System Division, Space Programme Office, World Meteorological Organization
Mitsuhiro Sakamoto	Acting Head, Space Services Department, Radiocommunication Bureau, International Telecommunication Union
Sharafat Gadimova	Executive Secretariat, International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems